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ORIGIN INR-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 SSM-03 SIG-03
CIAE-00 NSAE-00 DODE-00 /049 R

DRAFTED BY INR/RNA/NE:AAVACCARO:MP
APPROVED BY INR/RNA:PGRIFFIN
SSM:CWKONTOS
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION
SSM

-----092266 200318Z /64

P 192141Z APR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION SINAI PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY
USINT BAGHDAD PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY
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AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SANA PRIORITY
TREASURY DEPARTMENT WASHDC 0000

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
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TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 546 - APRIL 19, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING
PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY

OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

1. LEBANON. EMBASSY BEIRUT OBSERVES THAT AS A RESULT OF THE RECENT ROUND OF FIGHTING IN BEIRUT THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT FACES A SERIOUS CRISIS. CONTROVERSY IS RAGING AS TO WHO GAVE THE ORDER TO THE SYRIANS TO USE HEAVY WEAPONS. REGARDLESS OF THE FACTS THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT IS IN THE POLITICAL DILEMMA OF BEING ABLE TO NEITHER AVOW NOR DISAVOW THE SYRIAN ACTIONS, AND SHAMOUN APPEARS TO BE USING THE INCIDENT TO ATTACK SARKIS AND THE SYRIANS.

2. CURRENTLY, ALL EYES ARE FOCUSED ON THE APRIL 20 PARLIAMENTARY SESSION, WHICH SHOULD GIVE SOME IDEA ON HOW SHAMOUN WILL PLAY THE ISSUE. EMBASSY BEIRUT COMMENTS THAT THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT MAY STUMBLE THROUGH THE CURRENT CRISIS, AND THE SITUATION A MONTH FROM NOW MAY BE ABOUT THE SAME AS IT IS TODAY. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE MARONITES MAY HAVE REACHED THE POINT WHERE THEY WILL INSIST ON FORCING THE ISSUE; THE LEBANESE MUSLIMS IN THE MARONITE VIEW MUST

CHOOSE BETWEEN COOPERATING WITH THEM OR WITH THE PALESTINIANS. IF THE MUSLIMS REFUSE TO CHOOSE, THE MOST LIKELY COURSE, THE MARONITES MAY TRY TO GO IT ALONE.
(CONFIDENTIAL)

3. JORDAN. EMBASSY AMMAN REPORTS THAT THE EARLY REACTION
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TO KING HUSSEIN'S MOVE TO APPOINT A NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL HAS BEEN FAVORABLE. MANY JORDANIANS, HOWEVER, ARE RESERVING JUDGEMENT ON HOW DEMOCRATIC AND EFFECTIVE THE PROPOSED BODY WILL BE UNTIL THE NAMES OF THE APPOINTEES ARE ANNOUNCED. IT IS GENERALLY FELT THAT THE KING SHOULD INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF JORDAN'S MANY CONSTITUENCIES, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE "LOYAL OPPOSITION" IN ORDER TO CONVINCE DOUBTERS THAT THE COUNCIL IS MORE THAN A DEMOCRATIC FACADE. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME OPPONENTS OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING RIFAI, HAVE CRITICIZED THE PROPOSAL AS AN EFFORT BY SHARAF TO BUILD POLITICAL SUPPORT HIMSELF. STILL OTHERS ARE FEARFUL HUSSEIN SEES THE COUNCIL MERELY AS A MEANS TO SPREAD RESPONSIBILITY SHOULD HE ENGAGE JORDAN IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS SOMETIME SOON.
(CONFIDENTIAL)

4. SAUDIA ARABIA. THE SAUDI LEADERSHIP IS INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR THE F-15 SALE. IN A RECENT VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA, AIR FORCE SECRETARY STETSON WAS TOLD BY THE VICE MINISTER OF DEFENSE THAT THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT MUST KNOW WITHIN THE NEXT MONTH WHETHER IT IS GOING TO GET THE F-15S AND THAT A LONGER DELAY WAS

INTOLERABLE.

5. BEHIND THE ANXIETY OVER THE F-15S IS A MORE BASIC SAUDI ANXIETY OVER THE FUTURE OF US-SAUDI RELATIONS. THE SAUDIS HAVE LONG BELIEVED THAT THERE IS A "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES BASED ON MUTUAL ANTIPATHY TOWARD COMMUNISM AND RADICALISM, AND ALSO ON MUTUAL DEPENDENCE: FOR THE US ON SAUDI OIL, AND FOR THE SAUDIS ON US TECHNOLOGY AND ITS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP OF THE FREE WORLD. THIS RELATIONSHIP IS PERCEIVED AS REQUIRING A PERSONAL COMMITMENT ON BOTH SIDES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE OTHER.

6. IN THE VIEW OF THE SAUDIS, THEY HAVE PAID A CONSIDERABLE SECRET

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BLE PRICE FOR ACCOMMODATING THE US. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY BELIEVE THAT, ON OIL PRICES, THEY HAVE STRAINED THEIR RELATIONS WITH OTHER OPEC MEMBERS AND KEPT THEIR OWN PRODUCTION CONSIDERABLY HIGHER THAN THEIR FINANCIAL NEEDS WARRANT. MOREOVER, THE SAUDIS FEEL THAT THEY HAVE TAKEN LARGE FINANCIAL LOSSES BY STAYING WITH THE DOLLAR DESPITE

ITS POOR PERFORMANCE. ALSO WEIGHING HEAVILY ON THEIR LEDGER IS THE ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM. THEY CONTEND THAT THEY HAVE RISKED A GREAT DEAL BY NOT OPPOSING THE SADAT PEACE INITIATIVE. THEY FELT FROM THE BEGINNING THAT, WITHOUT STRONG US PRESSURE ON ISRAEL, THE SADAT INITIATIVE WOULD FAIL, SPLITTING THE ARAB WORLD AND HURTING THE MODERATES.

7. AT THE SAME TIME, THE SAUDIS GENERALLY DO NOT THINK THAT THE US HAS DONE ENOUGH IN RETURN FOR THESE "SACRIFICES." THEY VIEW THE LACK OF A COMPREHENSIVE US ENERGY POLICY AS EVIDENCE THAT THE US IS PLACING THE BURDEN OF FUTURE ENERGY PRESSURES SQUARELY ON THEM. THE SAUDIS APPLAUD US EFFORTS TO DATE ON ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUES, BUT ARE BEGINNING TO QUESTION WHETHER THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION HAS THE WILL TO EXERT SUFFICIENT PRESSURE ON ISRAEL FOR A SETTLEMENT. ON THE COMMUNIST THREAT, THE SAUDIS HAVE WATCHED THE US "IGNORE" ITS PLEA TO TAKE DECISIVE STEPS TO OPPOSE THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND ARE QUESTIONING WHETHER THE US CAN BE TRUSTED TO DEFEND SAUDI ARABIA AND ITS ALLIES FROM SOVIET EXPANSIONISM.

8. IN THIS ATMOSPHERE CROWN PRINCE FAHD, THE PRINCIPAL SAUDI PROPONENT OF A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US, IS UNDER INCREASING FIRE FROM WITHIN THE ROYAL FAMILY AND SECRET

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THE GOVERNMENT FOR CONCEDED SO MUCH TO AN UNTRUSTWORTHY FRIEND. TO ANSWER HIS CRITICS, FAHD HAS SEIZED ON THE F-15 SALE, PROMISED BY TWO US ADMINISTRATIONS, AS THE LITMUS TEST OF HIS JUDGMENT IN POSITIONING SAUDI ARABIA SO CLOSE TO THE US. FAHD FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT, REGARDLESS OF THE SALE, THE US IS STILL THE SAUDI ROYAL FAMILY'S IS BEST PROTECTOR. A REJECTION OF THE F-15 SALE, WOULD SEVERELY WEAKEN HIS ABILITY TO COUNTER THE ARGUMENTS OF HIS CRITICS THAT SAUDI POLICIES IN SUPPORT OF US INTERESTS ARE NOT PAYING SUFFICIENT DIVIDENDS. (SECRET) CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SUMMARIES, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE100592
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: AAVACCARO:MP
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780168-0659
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780438/aaaabgfl.tel
Line Count: 185
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b44301ab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN INR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2911919
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INTSUM 546 - APRIL 19, 1978 LONDON FOR KINSOLVING PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY
TAGS: PINR, EG, IS, XF
To: SINAI
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b44301ab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014